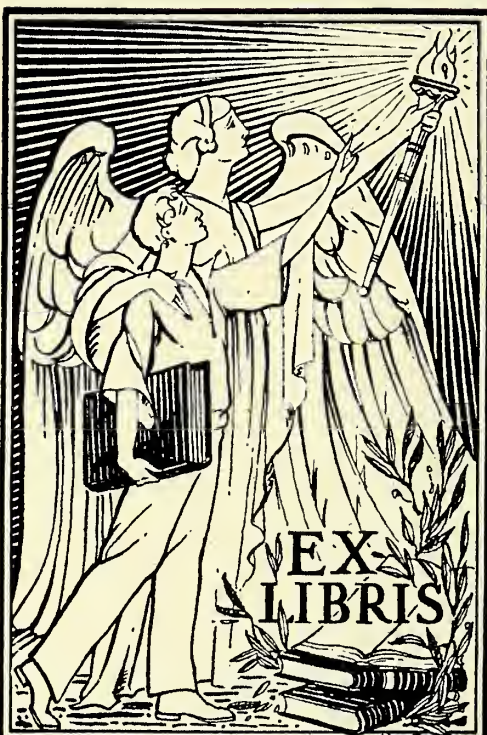


LETTER FROM:
MR. TOMOYUKI MATSUDA
654 NISHI-OGIKUBO SUBURN
TOKIO, JAPAN

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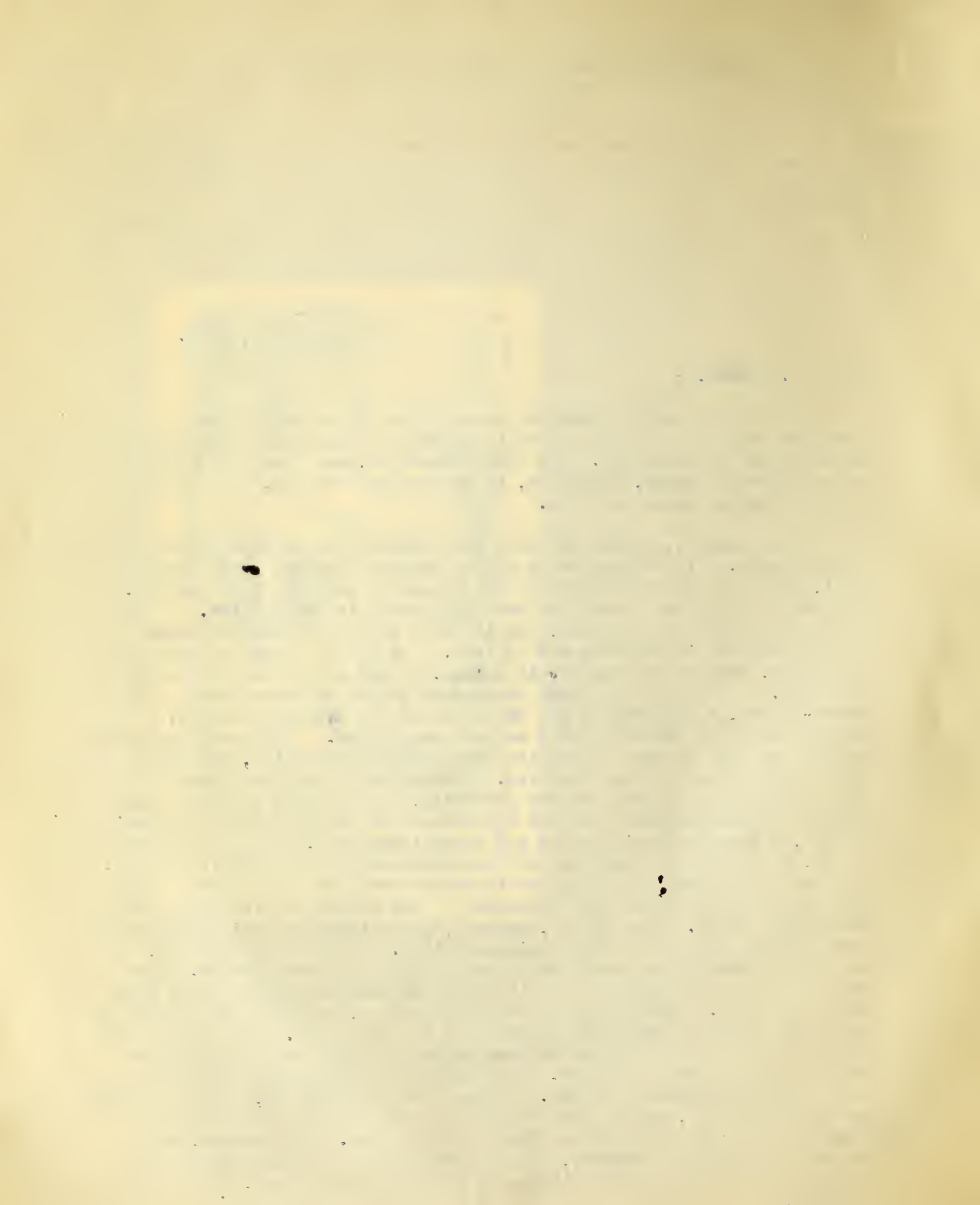
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Tokio-fu, Japan
February 7, 1928.

Dear Mr. Holmes,--

I have read in the December issue of your magazine that the American Foundation for the Blind is gathering information about the occupations for the blind. In this connection, may I call your attention to a profession which, I suppose, is quite strange to you, but quite common among us Japanese blind.

In my country, over a thousand blind people are engaged in the art of hari cure. It is the art of curing various diseases by means of hari, or a kind of pin of gold silver specially made for that purpose. The very art has the history of over 2000 years in the far East. It has stood the test of time, and in these days of highly developed medical science it survives and thrives. As to the origin of the hari cure, authorities differ in opinion. Some say it was originated in India. There are also some who insist on the tradition that skuna-hikona, a Japanese godman who lived in the mythological age, used to be curing disease by the use of bamboo pins. The most creditable opinion is that it came from China along with Confucianism, Buddhism and other Chinese art and learning. Historical researches show that as early as fifteen hundred years ago, the Japanese government had a civil service regulation for the appointment of one superintending hari doctor, 5 superior hari doctors and 10 hari students. The system, it seems, was a medical board or college maintained for the public welfare. This was continued for many generations but dwindled as the powers of the imperial government were delegated to the shogun or viceroy and to the feudal lords. The latter, however, patronized the hari doctors the most famous among them being Sugiyama Waichi. A blind country lad, he came to Yedo alone ambitious to be a first class hari doctor. He made but very slow progress in his study and his tutor told him to give up and go home. But he never gave the study up, and after he was 40 years of age could establish himself and obtained fame. He was summoned to the castle of the viceroy who was suffering from a serious disease and was on the verge of death. His operation proved successful and the shogun regained health. When asked by the shogun in the presence of high officials, as to what reward he wanted, the blind hari doctor answered that he wanted to be given an eye to see. The shogun, upon conference with his advisers, gave the benefactor a large estate with mansion, in a place called Hitotsume, meaning a single eye, and a large annuity.



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Waichi was a public spirited man and he used this mansion as a blind school and taught his art freely.

At present the hari cure license is given to those who passed government examinations or to those who finished the course in the art in the so qualified blind school.

Now let me give you a brief account of the hari operation. The hari is made of gold or silver, sharply pointed in one end, and the other end being connected with a small metal piece which we call "head." Its length is from 2 to 4 inches and its size is from so thin as a horse tail hair to so thick as a regular sewing needle. We have besides a small metal pipe a little shorter than the whole length of the hari or pin to be used, and both ends open so that the pin may pass through it. In the operation the pin is driven in to the body of the patient at various points. The choice of these points of operation according to each case is of the greatest importance. First you have to disinfect these points, your hands and hari and pipe with alcohol. Then you give a certain degree of pressure on the point in question with the tip of your left forefinger, and then you put thereunto your thumb of the same hand. This we call pressing hand. Then you take up in your right hand the pipe containing the pin inside, bring it to the point of operation so that the pipe comes between the forefinger and thumb of your pressing hand. The sharp end of the pin may thus be on the skin of the patient and the "head" or the handle would appear from the other or the upper end of the pipe. Then you lightly strike the "head" of the pin with your right index finger so that the pin may go down a little through the skin, causing, however, no pain to be accounted of to the patient. This done, you remove the pipe so that the pin remains shallowly planted on the skin, and held between the thumb and forefinger of your left hand. Next thing to do is to drive the pin down deeper into the body and this is done by the use of your right index finger and thumb taking hold of the pin by its head turning it this way and the other, slowly pushing it down and pulling it up a little. This is done very carefully so that no pain is caused but a rather pleasurable feeling instead which is peculiar to the hari cure. After the pin reaches to a desired depth and due stimulus is given to the nerve, the pin is slowly pulled up and taken off and you will see not a drop of blood come out of the point nor will you find the pin blood-stained in any slightest degree. You repeat the same thing over and over again at a time at other points and thus complete the operation.



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The operation itself may seem rather simple, but it is an art requiring a great amount of anatomical and medical knowledge and also a deliberate mind. Even the study of the points of operation requires a long time. The study of hari cure in the light of modern medical science has been tried recently in this country and it has now taken theoretical bases, but it still contains a mystical aspect because it is rather an art than a science which is difficult of generalization. Yet it cannot be denied that it is a very effective method of cure. A famous hari operator is attracting patients living scores of miles apart. A friend of mine has scarce time for dinner every day if he wants to finish all his patients before supper at seven in the evening. The writer himself is a masseur but after he has commenced hari along with massage, his income was doubled.

Is it not worth while for you to think over the matter for the welfare of American blind and also for those who are suffering.

Expressing in the end my deep sense of love, respect and admiration to you, I am

Yours,
Mr. Tomoyuki Matsuda
654 Nishi-ogikubo Suburb
Tokio, Japan.

